

Cathy Y. Anderson D.V.M.
Jackson County Animal Shelter
3370 Spring Arbor Rd
Jackson, Michigan 49203

October 30, 2013

To the Honorable Members of the Senate Agriculture Committee:

By way of introduction, I am Dr. Cathy Anderson. I am the shelter medicine veterinarian at Jackson County Animal Shelter in Jackson, Michigan. I also am an active member of the Michigan Veterinary Medical Association and serve on its legislative and animal welfare committees. Finally, I am a member of the Companion Animal Working Group sponsored by Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. I am writing in support of SB 560 which has been developed in a carefully thought out way and has many positive facets. I would like to elucidate just one of those points: stray hold times for cats.

In Michigan, over 165 shelters report the numbers of companion animals that come through their doors each year. This includes limited and open admission shelters. Of the over 200,000 animals that shelters receive each year, approximately 50% (100,000) are euthanized. The majority of these animals are cats. The bottom line is that annual cat intake by Michigan shelters is 100,000 and 70% (70,000) are euthanized. Another equally disturbing fact is that only about 2% of cats that are admitted to shelters are identified by and returned to their owners in Michigan, and indeed, across the nation.

From a shelter medicine stand point, cats are notorious for developing signs of upper respiratory tract disease. The greatest cause of manifestation of this contagious disease is stress and intake into a shelter is stressful. By day five in an animal shelter, 50% of cats have respiratory signs and by day 10, more than 80% of all cats will have signs of respiratory tract disease. Unfortunately the public does not want to adopt sick animals and ultimately many of them are euthanized. If stray hold times for cats are set at two days as set out by SB 560, that will allow potential owners the chance to identify their cats. More importantly, shelters can speed many of these cats into their adoption programs *before they become sick*. Animals that are out of the shelter are much less likely to become ill. This becomes a win-win situation, fewer cats are ill and more cats are likely to be adopted.

I support Senate Bill 560. It would have positive repercussions for shelters across Michigan. I ask you to do the same.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cathy Y. Anderson D.V.M.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cathy Anderson D.V. M.